

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



May 10, 2018

Re: Federal Fiscal Years 2019-2023 Transportation Improvement Program

Dear Mr. Mohler,

The Regional Transportation Advisory Council is an independent group of citizen and regional advocacy groups, municipal officials, and agencies charged by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with providing public input on transportation planning and programming.

The Advisory Council has reviewed and discussed the draft Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2019–23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). We appreciate the effort MPO staff have taken to discuss the proposed TIP projects and selection process with the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council offers the following comments on the 2019–23 TIP:

1. We support the MPO's direction to redirect funding from major investments to Complete Streets, intersection improvements, bicycle/pedestrian, and community transportation. We note that major investments still comprise 52 percent of the overall TIP allocation vs. a target of 44 percent, so the TIP is getting closer to but still not achieving the target.
2. We request the MPO to consider whether there may be any equity issues associated with the process for how the universe of projects is developed. For example, smaller or less wealthy communities may not have the resources to perform the initial design, engineering, and permitting work that is needed to advance a project to readiness for construction. If this is a barrier to developing beneficial projects, we ask that the MPO consider setting aside resources in addition to the existing technical assistance provided by Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS).
3. While we realize that the Community Transportation program is still being developed, we suggest that a consistent dollar amount for the program be set aside from year to year to provide stability and predictability for this program once it is fully operational.
4. We support the public comment period for the TIP, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) remaining at 30 days to allow sufficient time for input from citizens' groups that may meet once a month or less.
5. The Advisory Council appreciates the additional detail provided in the online TIP project database and finds the database very helpful for understanding the proposed projects and their benefits. While most of the projects appear to adhere to Complete Streets principles per Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and MPO policy, the Advisory Council

has noted a few specific cases where the description may need to be clarified or the project design revisited to ensure multimodal accommodations are fully provided, for example:

- a. Route 135, Hopkinton (606043)—No bicycle accommodations are described. Can a justification be provided or does this need to be considered in the design?
- b. Ferry Street, Everett (607652)—No bicycle accommodations are described. Can a justification be provided or does this need to be considered in the design?
- c. Melnea Cass Boulevard, Boston (605789)—The project description references on-road existing and proposed bike lanes. It is our understanding that currently there is an off-street path. Will this continue to be the case?
- d. Boylston Street, Boston (606453)—On-street bike lanes are proposed. Can a separated bike lane be considered on this busy street?

We appreciate the opportunity to express our thoughts to the MPO.

Sincerely,



Tegin Teich, Chair

Regional Transportation Advisory Council